

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NCRS use only  
received JAN 12 1982  
date entered FEB 11 1982

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic-- Jonathan Wheeler House  
and/or common-- Same

**2. Location**

street & number-- North Society Road \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town Canterbury \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of 2nd congressional district  
state Connecticut code 09 county Windham code 15

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Vazken and Ann Bandazian  
street & number North Society Road  
city, town Canterbury \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Connecticut

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Canterbury Land Records, Town Clerk's Office  
street & number Dr. Helen Baldwin School, Route 14  
city, town Canterbury \_\_\_\_\_ state Connecticut

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

State Register of Historic Places  
title \_\_\_\_\_ has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1975 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local  
depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission  
city, town Hartford \_\_\_\_\_ state Connecticut

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance:**

### Setting and General Description

The Jonathan Wheeler House is sited on the east side of North Society Road in the northern part of the town of Canterbury in eastern Connecticut, about half a mile below the Brooklyn town line. The 85 acres of land long associated with the house, about half farmland and half woodland, are typical of the land use in the town. The amount of land that goes with the Jonathan Wheeler House is characteristic of the early settlement pattern and subsequent agricultural development of Canterbury. Standing close to the road at the southwest corner of the acreage, the house faces west in an unmistakably rural setting.

The Jonathan Wheeler House is a 1½-story, five-bay, gable-roofed, brick, 38x30-foot, central-entrance structure on stone foundations with twin chimneys. Thought to have been built c. 1760, the plan of partial central hall with twin chimneys, in the early Georgian style, and the brick building material are both unusually early for this part of Connecticut. A new (1970) one-story, 32x27-foot addition has been built on at the southeast corner. (Photograph 1.)

### Boundary Justification

The distinctive rural site of the Jonathan Wheeler House makes an important contribution to its sense of place. For this reason, the 85 acres that traditionally have gone with the house are included in the nomination. This acreage is known as the first piece in the land records, as noted at item 10. Additional acreage located across North Society Road, west of the house, now part of the property, is not included in the nomination.

### Exterior

Two 12-over-12 windows are evenly spaced in the facade on either side of the restored, eight-panel, two-leaf, front door. The doorway has seven transom lights. The lintels of the windows are flush with the eaves. (Photograph 2.) A row of brick molded in cyma reversa profile forms a decorative water table above the ashlar stone foundations on the facade and the south elevation. (Photograph 3.) The brick wall is laid up with three courses of stretchers above the water table, then a row of headers, and thereafter in a common bond.

The side elevations each have two 8-over-8 windows at the first-floor level that are smaller than the facade windows, 56 inches rather than 66 inches high. The sills are at the same level but the lintels are lower. At the second-floor level each gable end has two similar windows. (Photographs 2 and 4.) The sash are restored. The connection to the new wing is through an original side doorway at the east end of the south elevation.

The fenestration of the rear (east) elevation has been altered. The back door has been moved to the south, replacing a window, and a 6-over-6 window has been installed near the center. (Photograph 4.)

The roof is covered with asbestos shingles. The end-wall, brick chimneys

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are visible above the ridge line. The small, north chimney was altered to its present size about the time of the Civil War. The large, south chimney has been restored to its 18th-century configuration. (Photographs 2 and 4.) The brickwork has been repointed, or perhaps relaid, under the front windows and in the peaks of the gable ends.

Farm outbuildings that formerly went with the house no longer are standing.

Interior, First Floor

The central hall that runs back (east) about half the depth of the house opens to the parlor on the north, to another room on the south, and to the kitchen on the east. Stairs to the upper floor rise toward the back of the hall, along its south wall. The first floor has an eight foot ceiling. Original plaster ceilings are no longer in place.

The north front room, the parlor, is the most elaborately finished room in the house. It is 14 feet deep, and has a fireplace at an angle in the northeast corner, with square-brick hearth. The chimney breast is plain wide boards, with an added raised molding. There is a cupboard to the right of the fireplace against the south wall of the chimney that parallels the exterior wall. (Photograph 5.) There is an ovolo molding cornice over the fireplace. Horizontal wainscoting with raised panelling between molded chair rail and base board runs around the four walls. The wainscoting breaks out under the windows forming window seats that are separated from the window sills by horizontal panels. (Photograph 6.) The window surrounds in this room, only, are molded.

The south front room is ten feet deep, four feet shallower than the parlor. The fireplace is flat in the east wall, and this entire wall originally had raised panelling such as is now seen in the chimney breast. Wainscoting resembles that in the parlor. This room is the only first-story room to have its original floor of wide boards.

The kitchen is the south rear room. Between the kitchen and the south front room, in the space created by the depth of the chimney, there is a walk-in cupboard, or buttery. Originally, the buttery was accessible only from the kitchen, but the panelled east wall of the front room has been altered to make a doorway. Originally, the only interior door to the kitchen was at the back of the central hall, the kitchen dimensions in the north-south direction being greater than that of the front room by the width of the hall.

The kitchen fireplace has been restored in brick, its original material, with a beehive oven to the left. A stone lintel extends over both the fireplace opening and the oven, and there is a stone hearth. The chimney breast is wide, horizontal boards with a small, recessed shelf space at upper left. (Photograph 7.)

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The northeast (rear) room has a brick, with stone lintel, fireplace on the diagonal in its northwest corner, complementing that in the north front room (parlor). The brick work of the flue above the fireplace is exposed and is seen to twist a quarter turn to become flat with the exterior wall as it reaches the ceiling and joins the main stack. This room has wainscoting on three sides of one wide, horizontal board. Recesses form shelves or small window seats under the windows, as in the north front room. Interior walls are 20-inch wide boards covered with lath and plaster. Most of the exterior walls are covered with lath and plaster on the brick, but a section of the east wall has a layer of wood between the brick and the lath; the reason for this arrangement is not understood. A single beam runs through the center of the house, from north wall to south wall, just behind the chimneys.

Interior, Upper Floor

The 36-inch wide stairway in the hall leads to the upper floor with twelve 8-inch risers and 9-inch treads. The triangular section of wall under the stairs is vertical, beaded, boarding. The stair railing consists of two turned balusters per tread supporting a hand rail that is molded on the outside and that runs from a square newel post at the bottom to an identical square newel post at the top. (Photograph 8.) At the top of the stairs there is a narrow central hall, finished with partitions on four sides and with a ceiling. The upper floor consists of two rooms, one on either side of the hall.

The roof structure consists of 12 pairs of principal rafters framed into a ridgepole, without collar beams or bracing of any kind. The ridgepole is a five-sided polygon, pointed at the top. (Photograph 9.) The south chimney, restored, is deeper in the east-west direction than the north chimney, reflecting the influence of the large, kitchen fireplace. The north chimney has been altered, perhaps at about the time of the Civil War, increasing the taper. The flooring in the upper level is original.

Cellar

The cellar is now accessible only from an exterior hatchway; formerly, cellar stairs ran down from the kitchen, below the second floor stairs. The stone chimney bases confirm the arrangements visible above. The faces of the south base are parallel with the front and back walls of the house, and are flared out, or coved, to support the hearths above. The north base is triangular in shape with the base of the triangle against the north wall, to support the diagonally-placed hearths above. (Photograph 10.) There is a large cavity, unexplained, in the bottom of the south chimney base. A series of brick piers, thought to be original, form what is almost a partition in the center of the cellar.

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Modern Wing

The 1½-story, gable-roofed, frame addition is compatible in size and shape with the original house. (Photograph 1.) Its single brick chimney has the bulk and proportions of the restored 18th-century chimney. A recessed front porch occupies most of the facade of the wing, with the front door at the north end of the porch. The ground slopes off to the rear, permitting the lower floor to be at grade at the back. On the interior, the entry way inside the front door connects with the side door of the old house. The largely open spaces of the main floor function as living room, dining area and kitchen, while the bedrooms are located on the lower level.

Present Status

A careful restoration of the Jonathan Wheeler House has been in progress for about ten years, and continues. The owners live in the new addition while work goes forward in the old house, which is vacant.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c. 1760

Builder/Architect Jonathan Wheeler

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### Criterion

The Jonathan Wheeler House is an early example in Connecticut of both a Georgian-style floor plan and a house built of brick. Its 1½-story height is unusual. The integrity of its fabric and the continued rural character of its site enhance the importance of the house in Connecticut architectural history. (Criterion C.)

#### History

Jonathan Wheeler (1736-1796) came to Canterbury before 1751 from the Stonington, Connecticut, area where his prosperous family was well established. He purchased several pieces of land in the 1750s including one thought to be the site of this house. Jonathan and his wife, Mary, who survived him by two years, are buried in a little cemetery about a mile away. These circumstances, plus the fact that he had the financial resources for a brick house, combine to support the postulate that Jonathan Wheeler built this house, and that he did so c. 1760.

While little is known of Jonathan Wheeler's career, reference to him appears in two historical contexts. His name is listed on a bronze plaque in Brooklyn's Old Trinity Church as one of the petitioners in 1771 for the construction of that edifice. Allegiance to the Episcopal church is consistent with his background and economic status. Later, in 1791, he again became a petitioner, this time to the General Assembly, requesting establishment of a militia company within the limits of Canterbury's North Society.<sup>1</sup> The property remained in the possession of the Wheeler family until 1870.<sup>2</sup> The last member of the Wheeler family to reside in the house had the first name Warren, the same as one of Jonathan Wheeler's sons. This uniformity of names suggests that the house descended in the family of Jonathan Wheeler, and strengthens the local tradition that he was the builder.

#### Discussion

A remarkable amount of original fabric remains in the Jonathan Wheeler House, and little in the way of alterations has occurred to diminish the integrity of the house and its surroundings. The stone fences that line North Society Road probably have not changed since the house was built and the surrounding land, while perhaps less intensely cultivated now than in the past, still is thoroughly rural in character. All the framing of the house, including the exterior and interior walls, except for repairs,

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

J. Frederick Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963, reprint of Yale University Press, 1924.

continued

NOT RECORDED  
APR 11 1982

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 85 approximately

Quadrangle name Plainfield

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24,000

UMT References

A 1 9 | 2 5 1 6 9 0 | 4 6 2 6 4 2 0  
Zone Easting Northing

B 1 9 | 2 5 1 6 0 0 | 4 6 2 6 0 0 0  
Zone Easting Northing

C 1 9 | 2 5 1 5 4 0 | 4 6 2 6 0 0 0

D 1 9 | 2 5 1 5 0 0 | 4 6 2 5 9 2 0

E 1 9 | 2 5 0 8 9 0 | 4 6 2 5 9 5 0

F 1 9 | 2 5 0 8 3 0 | 4 6 2 6 6 1 0

G 1 9 | 2 5 1 3 6 0 | 4 6 2 6 6 1 0

H | | | | | | |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is described as first piece in Canterbury Land Records, volume 49, page 573.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom, Consultant

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date January 6, 1980

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203 566-3005


city or town Hartford state Connecticut

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local


As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date January 4, 1982

**For HCERS use only**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 Entered in the National Register date 2/11/82

*not returning* Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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appears to be original. The fenestration has changed only on the rear (east) wall. The present sash and front doors are not original, but are faithful restorations. The panelling of the two front rooms, the moldings of the parlor, the detail of the stairs, and the complete upper-floor hall combine to form an unusual amount of original interior detail. The north chimney has been diminished in size at the top, and the south chimney has been re-built from the first floor up, but their bases have not been altered, and the fireplaces appear as they originally did.

The traditional central-chimney, early 18th-century floor plan began to lose favor about 1750 to the Georgian scheme of central hall and twin chimneys. This house, built c. 1760, is an early example of the trend, probably explainable in remote Canterbury only by the affluent port city (Stonington) background of its owner. Another house, built in New Haven County at about the same time, has an almost identical floor plan. The Samuel Parsons House,<sup>3</sup> Wallingford, Connecticut, thought to date from c. 1770, has the same elements of half central hall leading directly to the kitchen and of angle fireplaces back-to-back in the two rooms to the left. In both houses the fireplaces have no mantel shelves.

A further, possible relationship with the Wallingford area is provided by the brick building material. The John Barker House<sup>4</sup> there has the same shape of molded brick as found in the water table of the Jonathan Wheeler House. Moreover, competent authority<sup>5</sup> has observed that the color of the brick in the Jonathan Wheeler House is not the yellowish-red it would be if the brick were made from local clay. Instead, the brick has the pink-red cast associated with clay found in central and western Connecticut. If the brick was brought to Canterbury from central Connecticut, such long distance transportation makes it all the more unusual. J. Frederick Kelly, the early and leading scholar of pre-Revolutionary War architecture in Connecticut, states that, "Brick houses were rarely built before 1750; but about that time they appear to have become popular in localities where brick were abundant."<sup>6</sup> The two oldest brick houses Kelly mentions are the Allyn House, Windsor, c. 1750, and the Joel Bradley House, North Haven, 1759. Both of these were 2½-story houses. Kelly also states that Flemish bond was often used in the early brick houses. The Jonathan Wheeler House is different from Kelly's norm in that the brick is not local, the house is 1½ stories high, and the brick is not laid up in Flemish bond.<sup>7</sup>

Summary

The Jonathan Wheeler House is one of the early brick houses in Connecticut, certainly one of the oldest still standing. The brick assumes added interest from the fact that it was transported a great distance, and was laid up in other than the usual Flemish bond. Moreover, the low height



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of the house, 1½ stories, is out of the ordinary. The combination of the brick building material with the newly fashionable Georgian central hall floor plan indicates that the builder could and did go to great lengths to build an up-to-date house. The integrity of the house, and the integrity of its rural setting that continues to be free of intrusions, combine to make the Jonathan Wheeler House an important asset in Connecticut architectural history.

1. Public Record of the State of Connecticut, May 1789 through October 1792, v. 7, p. 297.
2. Canterbury Land Records, volume 27, page 334.
3. Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places pending.
4. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
5. Professor JelledeBoer, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Wesleyan University, in letter to author dated January 18, 1980.
6. Kelly, p. 79.
7. Kelly, pp. 20, 65, 79. Connecticut Hall at Yale University was also built of brick, c. 1750, with the added interest that it is the third known structure in the state with a water table of curved, molded brick.

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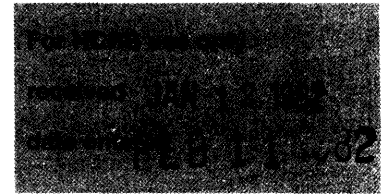
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On March 27, 1980, while work on restoration of the north chimney was in progress, a brick was found in which the year date 1760 is traced, as by a finger. The brick was in the north gable-end wall, east section, over the window. The numerals are in the wide face of the brick, and were face down in the mortar.

This discovery strengthens the determination that the house was built in 1760.

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Letter, Professor Jelle de Boer, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Wesleyan University, to author, dated January 18, 1980.

Map, "Windham County, Connecticut", Philadelphia: E. M. Woodford, 1856.

Public Record of the State of Connecticut, May 1789 through October 1792,  
v. 7.